

DUTIES ON IMPORTS.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE,

ADVERSE TO

THE PASSAGE OF THE BILL

IMPOSING DUTIES ON IMPORTS.

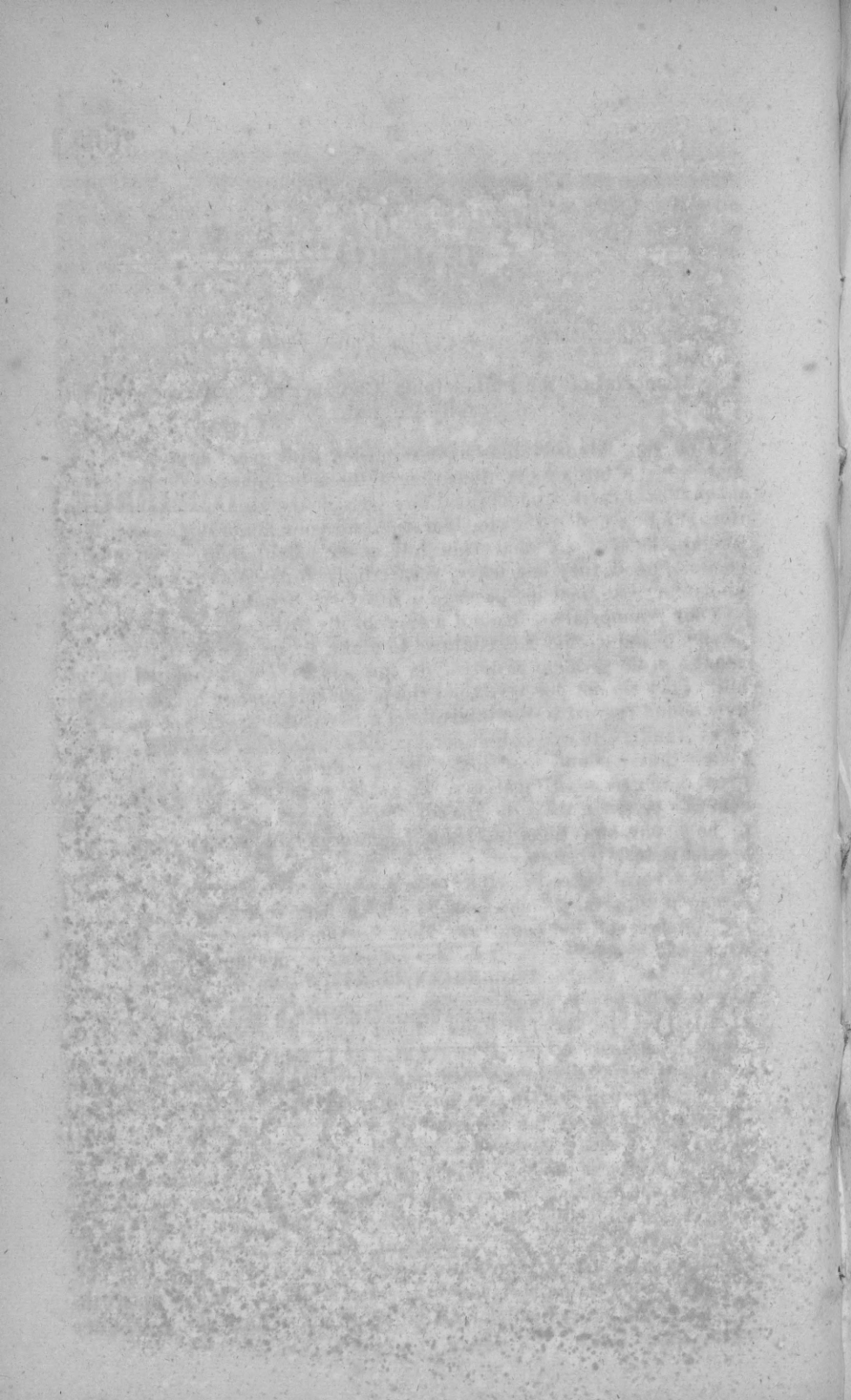
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MEMORIAL.

To the Honorable the Senate of the United States :

The Memorial of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, respectfully sheweth :

That your Memorialists have regarded with great anxiety the progress of "A bill for the alteration of the acts imposing duties on imports;" which it is understood has passed the House of Representatives, and is under the consideration of your honorable body. Believing, as they do, that this bill is not calculated to promote the common good, they beg leave, respectfully, to lay before you their remonstrance against the passage of it by the Senate.

Your Memorialists are not aware of the existence of such reasons as should induce the Legislature to make so great and important a change in the system of duties on imports as is contemplated by this bill. They do not perceive the evidence of this change being required by a sound regard to the interests of a particular species of manufactures; and if it was called for by those interests, it would seem to them, that a sound and just policy would not, to effect it, exact so great a sacrifice as must here be made of the other interests of the community. On the other hand, there appears to your memorialists to be strong objections to this bill, some of which they respectfully beg leave to lay before you.

For several years there has been a progressive increase of the duties upon imports, the object of which has been to aid the manufacturing interest of the country. How far this system of protection has wrought a beneficial result to that interest, is, perhaps, a question not easily to be settled. Its operation, however, upon the other great interests of society is considered by your memorialists as having been greatly prejudicial; and indeed upon the commercial interest it has been almost destructive. The regular and profitable commerce of the country undoubtedly languishes; and the cause is obviously seen in the prohibition of certain portions of our trade, which has arisen from the system of protection to manufactures. When the tariff was revised in 1824, it was considered to be settled upon principles of accommodation, and regard to the several interests of the community; and it was not expected that within so short a space of time so great a change, and yet one so partial in its operation, as that contemplated by this bill, would be attempted. Your memorialists would respectfully submit, that such an innovation upon the system as this is, one directed towards a single object, and without any consideration of the other parts of the system, cannot but be productive of extensive injury and inconvenience.

The amount of duties proposed to be laid by this bill upon certain kinds of woollens, is considered by practical men as being in effect a prohibition of the article. It is believed that this article neither is nor can be advantageously manufactured among us, so far as to supply, at reasonable prices, the demands of the country. The consequence is a monopoly to the manufacturer, and all the evil which must flow from such a monopoly ; so far, then, as the direct operation of this measure at home, is seen, it is to exalt one interest upon the depression of many others ; to give peculiar advantages to a particular manufacturing interest, at the certain expense of the agricultural and commercial interests of the country.

But it is apprehended by your memorialists, that this measure will be attended with other mischievous consequences, bearing seriously upon our foreign commerce. At a moment when Great Britain is relaxing her system, in such manner, that the great agricultural product of our Middle States may find a market there ; it would seem to be unwise, on our part, to prohibit the importation of the article, naturally to be received in return for our productions. In addition, that same commercial nation may fairly be expected to countervail a measure bearing, as this does, upon an important branch of her manufactures, by the imposition of duties upon the great staple of our Southern States ; thereby crippling its cultivation here, and protecting it in their own colonies. These considerations, prospective as they are, your memorialists respectfully submit, are reasonable in themselves, and deserving of attention, in your deliberations upon this important question.

The effect of the system of measures to which this belongs upon the revenue of the country, derived from its imports, is obvious. That revenue which has been so productive, which has been so faithfully, honorably, and effectually paid, and which at the same time is so lightly felt by the community at large, should, in the opinion of your memorialists, be regarded with peculiar care. The measure under consideration is calculated further to diminish that revenue, and offer incitements to evade and violate the law, and to depart from that line of rectitude which has signally distinguished those concerned in the importation of goods subject to the payment of duties.

Your memorialists are firmly persuaded, that the bill in question will work serious and extensive mischief to the commerce of the country, and to all those interests which are immediately connected with it, and dependent upon it ; they believe that a retaliation may reasonably be expected, which would affect sensibly our great agricultural products ; and they consider that the measure proposed, in its operation, will be partial, unequal, and unjust. On these grounds, they respectfully request, that the passage of the bill may be arrested, and that it may not receive the concurrence of your honorable body.

ROBERT RALSTON,

President of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

JNO. VAUGHAN, *Sec. Phil. C. C.*

Philadelphia, 19th January, 1827.